

The Month's Work

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September is the month in which all winter preparations should be completed except packing, if the bees are to be wintered outside, or placing them in their winter repository if to be wintered inside. These preparations were begun in July and the fore part of August, in seeing that every colony had a queen, and every undesirable queen replaced with a good one and all undesirable and weak colonies united so as to be of sufficient strength to winter. Should any of these operations from oversight or otherwise be neglected, they should now be attended to at once.

From the tenth to the fifteenth of September all surplus cases queen-excluders, bee-escapes and other summer paraphernalia should be removed and the hives contracted to about six or eight Langstroth combs each or their equivalent in capacity, according to the strength of the different colonies occupying them, the idea being to leave in each hive no more combs than what the bees can easily cover, or will be somewhat crowded upon. This done, ascertain the amount of honey that each colony now contains, and mark to be fed all those which have less than twenty-five or thirty pounds.

To find out the amount of honey that each colony has in its hive, weigh it, and deduct therefrom the weight of the empty hive, combs and bees, this may be obtained by weighing a similar hive with combs and bees, which have no honey.

From about the twentieth to the twenty-fifth of September those

colonies requiring it should be fed. This is done by removing empty combs from such colonies and inserting in their stead full ones until each is supplied. If the colony is strong, the full thirty pounds of honey will be required, but if a little weak twenty-five pounds may be sufficient, but the other five pounds had better be given such colonies if on hand.

Where the bee-keeper has not the full combs of honey to feed as above, resort will then have to be made to sugar syrup. To make this syrup take nine pounds of the best granulated sugar and three pounds of water, bring it to a boil, and at once add a teaspoonful of tartaric acid, previously dissolved in a little water and immediately remove from the fire.

In feeding sugar syrup or honey to bees by a feeder for winter stores, it should be given to them as fast as they will store it, or they will start breeding. A large feeder will be required for this purpose, the Miller possibly being as good as any. After levelling the hive place the feeder on it and contract the entrance to about one or two inches, just before sundown and having the syrup heated to about milk warm put it into the feeder. A good colony will store from ten to fifteen pounds of such syrup in a night, and if it should require more than this amount, the balance should be given on the evening following, so that not more than two consecutive nights are required for the feeding, when continued for a much longer period brooding is likely to be started, which is not a desirable condition at this season; for this reason a small feeder should not be used for feeding winter stores.

If the winter feeding be neglected until after the twenty-fifth of September, and especially until October when the nights are frosty and the bees begin to form cluster for winter,